

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 91
INFO AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

UNCLAS SINGAPORE 1760

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: SHUM, PINS, SN
SUBJECT: RELEASE OF POLITICAL DETAINEES

1. FIVE POLITICAL DETAINEES, MEMBERS OR ASSOCIATES OF THE MALAYAN PEOPLE'S LIBERATION FRONT, HAVE BEEN RELEASED BY THE INTERNAL SECURITY DEPARTMENT ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS. STORIES IN THE APRIL 15 NEW NATION AND THE APRIL 16 SUNDAY TIMES, BOTH BASED ON A PUBLICATION OF THE SINGAPORE EX-POLITICAL DETAINEES ASSOCIATION, STATED THAT THE FIVE HAD BEEN RELEASED AFTER "RECANTING THEIR PAST COMMUNIST ACTIVITIES," PLEDGING LOYALTY TO SINGAPORE, AND REBUKING "THOSE RESPONSIBLE FOR LURING THEM INTO CLANDESTINE SUBVERSIVE ACTIVITIES." NO INFORMATION IS GIVEN ON THE DATE OF RELEASE OR PRECISE LENGTH OF DETENTION. DATA ON THOSE RELEASED IS AS FOLLOWS.

2. NG LIANG MUI, 18, SIX YEARS PRIMARY EDUCATION, EMPLOYED BY SINGAPORE CHARTERED INDUSTRIES UNTIL HIS DETENTION IN JULY 1977. NG ADMITTED DELIVERING LETTERS AND EXPLOSIVES TO A MALAYSIA YOUTH FOR A WOMAN COLLEAGUE WHO HAD BEFRIENDED HIM. ALTHOUGH THIS COLLEAGUE HAD WANTED HIM TO JOIN THE MPLF, NG'S APPLICATION WAS "SOMEHOW DELAYED."

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3. LOH KHENG WAH, 29, PRIMARY SCHOOL EDUCATION, JOINED MPLF IN 1976. FROM A POOR FAMILY, LOH IS SAID TO HAVE BECOME "DISILLUSIONED WITH SOCIETY AFTER HER PARENTS' DEATH AMID FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES." A FEMALE CONSTRUCTION WORKER IS SAID TO HAVE EXPLOITED THESE FEELINGS BY GIVING LOH COMMUNIST READING MATERIALS IN 1973, AND ENCOURAGING HER TO JOIN THE MPLF.

4. KOH SONG MAY, 29, COMPLETED SECONDARY EDUCATION, JOINED MPLF IN 1976. KOH WAS A MEMBER OF A "PATRIOTIC YOUTH GROUP" WHICH BROKE AWAY FROM THE SINGAPORE AMATEUR (DRAMATIC) SOCIETY IN 1969. DESPITE HER MEMBERSHIP IN MPLF, KOH IS REPORTED AS SAYING THAT SHE "REMAINED WITHOUT MUCH ACHIEVEMENT DUE TO HER TEMPER AND LACK OF ORGANIZATIONAL ABILITY."

5. TAN AH LEK, 30, WORKSITE CARPENTER, ACTIVE IN BARISAN SOCIALIS FROM 1967, AND MEMBER OF MPLF SINCE 1969. TAN IS REPORTED AS SAYING THAT "HE WAS INFLUENCED BY SUBVERSIVE ELEMENTS WHEN HE WAS A STUDENT IN SIN MIN SECONDARY SCHOOL IN 1964," AND THAT HE PARTICIPATED IN ILLEGAL DEMONSTRATIONS AND ANTI-GOVERNMENT ACTIVITIES IN 1966 AND 1967.

6. LIM BOON CHAY, 27, "FROM A FARMING FAMILY," JOINED MPLF IN 1972. HE IS SAID TO HAVE BEEN INFLUENCED BY PRO-COMMUNISTS IN THE BARISAN SOCIALIS IN THE EARLY SEVENTIES, AND TO HAVE HAD CONTACT WITH THE MALAYAN COMMUNIST UNDERGROUND IN 1972 PRIOR TO JOINING THE MPLF. WHEN HIS SUPERIORS IN THE FRONT CRITICIZED HIS MARRIAGE IN 1975, LIM "BECAME DISILLUSIONED" AND "REALIZED THAT WE HAD NO FREEDOM AND HAD LOST OUR SELF-RESPECT."

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7. NO FURTHER INFORMATION ON THE RELEASED DETAINEES IS AVAILABLE AT POST.

8. COMMENT: THOSE RELEASED APPEAR TO BE FROM ONE OF TWO SEPARATE GROUPS OF ALLEGED MNLF MEMBERS ARRESTED IN SUMMER OF 1977 FOLLOWING THE DISCOVERY BY SINGAPORE AUTHORITIES OF AN MNLF PROJECT FOR STEALING EXPLOSIVES FROM THE SINGAPORE CHARTERED INDUSTRIES FACTORY. THEIR RELEASE AT THIS TIME FOLLOWS THE RECENT RELEASE OF SEVERAL OTHER DETAINEES HELD UNDER THE INTERNAL SECURITY ACT. (77 SINGAPORE 4590 CONTAINS FURTHER DETAILS OF THE 1977 ARRESTS.)
HOLDRIDGE

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